

إِنَّا نَدْعُوكَ يَا اللَّهُ الْإِسْلَامَ

THE MUSLIM SUNRISE

*A Journal of Islamic Renaissance
in America*

In This Issue:

The Concept of "Second Coming" in
World Religions

New Research on Jesus, the Cross, and
The Shroud of Turin

The Torah, the New Testament and
the Quran

A Cursory Glance on the Bible

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THE MUSLIM SUNRISE

A Journal of the Islamic Renaissance in America

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CONTENTS

A Passage from the Holy Quran 1

Sayings of the Holy Prophet 3

Editorial:

Islam's Response to the Challenge of the
Cancun Conference 4

The Concept of "Second Coming" in
World Religions

Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan 12

New Research on Jesus, The Cross, and the
Shroud of Turin

Khalil Ahmad Nasir 25

The Torah, the New Testament and the Quran
Dr. George Barbary 43

A Cursory Glance on the Bible

Dr. Qazi Muhammad Barkatullah 49

A Passage From the Holy Quran

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَنْشُرُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا

وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا ﴿١٥﴾

وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا ﴿١٦﴾

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ

إِنَّ عَذَابَهَا كَانَ غَرَامًا ﴿١٧﴾

إِنَّهَا سَاءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا ﴿١٨﴾

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَفْقَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ

بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا ﴿١٩﴾

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَدْعُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ وَلَا يَقْتُلُونَ

النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا يَزْنُونَ

وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ يَلْقَ أَثَامًا ﴿٢٠﴾

يُضَاعَفْ لَهُ الْعَذَابُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَيَخْلُدْ فِيهِ

مُهَانًا ﴿٢١﴾

إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَأُولَئِكَ

يُسَدِّلُ اللَّهُ سَيَّرتَهُمْ حَسَنَاتٍ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا

رَحِيمًا ﴿٢٢﴾

Translation

The true servants of the Gracious One are those who walk upon the earth with humility and when they are accosted by the ignorant ones, their response is: Peace; who pass the hours of the night in prostration and standing before their Lord; who entreat: Lord, avert from us the punishment of Hell, it is a heavy torment, it is indeed an evil resort and dwelling-place; who are neither extravagant nor niggardly in spending, but keep a balance between the two; who call not on any god beside Allah, nor destroy a life that Allah has declared sacred except for just cause, and commit not adultery, for whoso does that shall meet with the punishment of his sin and his punishment will be intensified on the day of Judgment and he will abide therein disgraced, except for those who repent and believe and work righteousness, whose evil deeds Allah will convert into good ones, Allah being Most Forgiving, Ever Merciful.

(SURA: AL-FURQAN, 64-71)

Sayings of the Holy Prophet:

Motive determines the value of all conduct, and a person attains that which he desires. If the motive of the one who emigrates is to attain to Allah and His Messenger, then that is the purpose of his migration; and he who migrates seeking the world attains to it, and he who migrates for the sake of a woman, marries her and thus his migration is for the purpose he has in mind.

§

After the fall of Mecca emigration is no longer obligatory; but striving in the cause of Allah and yearning for it continue obligatory; when you are called you should go forth.

§

Allah does not regard your bodies and looks, but looks at your hearts.

§

The Holy Prophet was asked: Which of three strives in the cause of Allah, one who fights in order that he should display his bravery, or one who fights out of a feeling of indignation, or one who fights in order to show off? He replied: He who fights so that the word of Allah be exalted, is the one who strives in the cause of Allah.

Editorial

ISLAM'S RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGE OF THE CANCUN CONFERENCE

On October 22 and 23 of 1981, a historic International Meeting on Cooperation and Development was held in Cancun, Mexico. Top government leaders from 8 industrialized and 14 developing nations along with Secretary General Kurt Waldheim of the United Nations met for informal discussions of food security and agricultural development; trade and industrialization of basic products; energy, and monetary and financial questions confronting the entire globe in our times. Many Heads of States including President Ronald Reagan of the U.S.A. attended.

Although the roots of these vital problems can be traced in the period of world history extending over several centuries, they have received rapidly increasing significance since 1964 when the first United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD I) was held. Over the last decade the North-South gap has assumed proportions of economic crisis unparalleled in the history of the world. Nearly three quarters of the earth's population with an average per capita GNP of only \$600 is witnessing the ever-widening economic gap between them and the industrialized nations whose per capita GNP is around \$10,000.

The Cancun Conference reflected in a microcosm some of the major problems affecting virtually all less developed countries. Several years earlier, in the on-going North-South dialogue, the developing nations raised the issue of a "New International Economic Order" in 1974 in Algeria which was later adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

Unfortunately the response of the North to the grievances of the South in general, and of the United States, in particular, continued to be disappointing. It was not until early 1980 when the deadlock between the two sides began to break. First major step in this direction was the famous report of the Willy Brandt Commission which issued a call for a program for survival to the industrialized and the less developed countries. It proposed an informal conference of world leaders to discuss this major world economic problem. In this context, the South believes that the current crisis can be resolved through commodity agreements about price-stability of raw materials, relaxation of direct and indirect tariff-barriers, debt relief, natural sovereignty over natural resources, and mass transfer of technology.

The Islamic World

Islam can play a uniquely significant role toward an enduring and equitable solution of

the contemporary economic problem of mankind. Although adherents of the faith of Islam live in every region around the globe, virtually all Muslim countries are located in the South. They are strategically situated in the center of the Third World. Stretching all the way from Indonesia to Morocco, they seem to be physically closer to the North than the rest of the Third World. In addition, there are substantial and significantly large minorities of Muslims in several important countries. Currently, there are about 45 to 50 million Muslims in the U.S.S.R., approximately 80 million in India, and more than 20 million in the Peoples' Republic of China. Almost one in every five of the world's population is a Muslim, and the vast majority live in countries with the fastest growing populations.²³

Within the approximately 120 nations of the Third World, about 40 countries belong to the world of Islam. They share all the problems as well as the potentials of the South. Among them are some of the poorest LDCs like Bangladesh and some of the richest, due to the newly found petroleum, like Saudi Arabia. Consequently, they share the problems, ordeals and turmoils as well as the hopes, dreams and expectations of the Third World with other countries of the South. Most of them have tasted the humiliation of direct or indirect colonial rule by the West.

Most of them suffer from the chronic problem of political upheavals and unstable

governments. Most of them are experiencing social and religious revolutions of both extreme right or ultra-left. In short, the Islamic countries are in a state of global upheaval. Collectively, they mirror, in a microcosm, all the afflictions that plague the South, harbor all the grievances against the North and nourish all the dreams of development.

The issues of New International Economic World Order and Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in 1974 are, therefore, of fundamental and vital concern to the contemporary Muslim world.

The Impact of Islam on the New International Economic Order

In a discussion of the role of the Islamic nations in the Third World, the influence of the faith of Islam as a vital factor cannot be overlooked. Faiths of mankind, in general, contribute toward shaping, determining and regulating the values, attitudes and conduct of their followers. The teachings of Islam are, in this regard, uniquely relevant to the contemporary quest for a new global economic system.

To begin with, Islam belongs to the category of those religions which, unlike many others, are primarily evangelical. In Islam it is considered a duty of every follower that he take the message of Islam to those outside its fold. The very nature of Islam of being a missionary faith confers on it a universality. The verses of the Quran, the Islamic scripture, as well as the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad are full of exhortations in this regard. From the very beginning, the Quran describes God as the Lord, Creator and Sustainer of all universes. He is not portrayed as God only of a particular people. Man, as His vicegerent on earth, is enjoined to reflect these attributes of the Creator in his life. (*Al-Fatihah:2*)

Again, Islamic teachings do not limit their scope to only one aspect of man's life. Islam claims to expound all that is needed by mankind—social, economic and spiritual—for the complete fulfillment of life. It claims that it offers all that is basic for the promotion of human welfare in all spheres. (*Al-Nahl:90*)

Further, rather than discourage rational thinking and scientific investigation, it urges observation and reflection, the exercise of reason and understanding. It emphasizes that there is a purpose and an order in the creation of this universe. Man should endeavor to understand it and draw lessons from it. (*Yunus: 6-7*)

In its social teachings, it stresses universal brotherhood and equality. Consequently, it is enjoined as a duty upon a Muslim to look after the needy and the poor, not as an act of superiority of the rich over the less-privileged, but as a duty.

Consequently, as Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan states in his treatise, *Islam and Human Rights*:

It aims at merging all sections of society into a single community so that all persons may feel themselves to be members of the same family. A whole set of directions exhorts those who are better off to adopt simple ways of life and not to set up artificial barriers in the way of free social intercourse."

The central theme of the New International Economic Order is a just and equitable distribution of the resources and wealth among all mankind. The Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States also declares it as a "fundamental purpose" to promote its establishment "based on equity, sovereign equality, interdependence, common interest and cooperation among all States, irrespective of their economic and social systems."

The economic system of Islam essentially expounds the same theme. It is based on the concept that absolute ownership of everything belongs to God alone. Consequently, its aim is to secure the widest and most beneficent

distribution of wealth through institutions proposed by Islam and through moral exhortation. It advocates that wealth must remain in constant circulation among all sections of the community and should not become the monopoly of the rich. (*Al-Baqarah*: 108, *Al-Imran*: 190, *Al-Dhariyat*: 20, *Al-Hashr*: 8)

It is this concept of economic values which could have led Lance Morrow to comment in *Time* magazine, "Islam is, as much as anything else, the repository for grievances, envies and hatreds that Third World have-nots harbor for the privileged of the globe. Islam gives cohesion to complaints about the injustices of the world." (See Lance Morrow's "Islam Against the West" in *Time*, December 17, 1979)

Islam, therefore, is neither silent nor indifferent to the proposed New International Economic Order. To the contrary, it is fundamentally concerned with an enduring global social and economic structure for which it not only teaches its doctrines but also aims to provide practical means to implement.

It would be totally erroneous to assume that the Islamic countries are faithfully reflecting these teachings in their policies. Colonialism of the last several centuries, divergent nationalistic movements, exposure to the contemporary political and social ideologies such as capitalism, communism, zionism and socialism, international conflicts and domestic problems have brought about a widespread

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It would be totally erroneous to assume that the Islamic countries are faithfully reflecting these teachings in their policies. Colonialism of the last several centuries, divergent nationalistic movements, exposure to the contemporary political and social ideologies such as capitalism, communism, zionism and socialism, international conflicts and domestic problems have brought about a widespread

revolution with shattering changes in many parts of the Islamic world. Attitudes toward Islam in States like Saudi Arabia, Libya, Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Pakistan are strikingly diversified. Resentment and reaction against exploitation by imperialist and industrialized nations, along with many other factors, have driven such countries as Iran and Pakistan toward different forms of rigid fundamentalism.

In short, for the last few years, the Islamic world has been going through a fearful period of upheaval and turmoil. Nevertheless, the basic teachings of Islam can only be a positive factor toward the North-South dialogue. Nothing in Islam is incompatible with the introduction of advanced technology and industrial development. It can only bring about a global distribution of wealth that Islam emphatically advocates.

Of course, one cannot ignore the bafflingly divergent political, social and economic trends in various Islamic countries in modern times. It may be hoped, however, that the Islamic world will, in the foreseeable future, return to Islam's central message concerning the economic aspects of the society, that of widest global, equitable and just distribution of both natural and human resources.

Only then can the Muslim countries make their proper contribution toward the North-South Dialogue and the establishment of New International Economic Order.

THE CONCEPT OF THE “SECOND COMING” IN WORLD RELIGIONS

by

**Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan,
Former President, International
Court of Justice**

The world of religion is familiar with the concept of the second coming of great religious teachers who have passed away, but curiously enough all those who are looking forward to the fulfilment of the prophecies relating to a second advent of a great teacher expect that he would return to the earth in his physical body. This concept has been responsible for great confusion, bewilderment, and conflict.

The notion that Jesus had not been nailed to the cross and had been raised bodily to heaven, whence he would descend to earth in the latter days, had gained currency among a section of orthodox Muslims divines as early as the third century of the Islamic era, despite the fact that the Holy Quran emphatically negatives the possibility of a human being ascending bodily to heaven. The disbelievers of Mecca asserted that they would not believe in the Holy Prophet unless he were to ascend up into heaven and were to bring down for them a book that they

could read. He was commanded to reply to them: Holy is my Lord. I am but a human being sent as a Messenger (17:94).

Then how did the misconception that Jesus had been raised bodily to heaven arise? It was the result of a gross misinterpretation of the term *raf'a* (spiritual exaltation) employed in the Holy Quran with reference to Jesus. The Jews claimed that Jesus having died on the cross had become accursed (Deut. 21:23). The Holy Quran affirmed that Jesus had not died on the cross, and had not become accursed, but had died a natural death and, like all the righteous, was spiritually exalted to his Lord. It says:

The enemies of Jesus devised their plans and Allah devised His plan; Allah is the best of planners. Allah reassured Jesus: I shall cause thee to die a natural death and shall exalt thee to Myself (3:55-56).

At another place it is said:

The Jews assert: We did kill Jesus son of Mary, who claimed to be the Messiah and a Messenger of Allah; whereas they slew him not, nor did they compass his death upon the cross, but he was made to appear to them like one crucified to death; and those who have differed in the matter of his having been taken down alive from the cross are certainly in a state of doubt concerning it,

they have no definite knowledge but only follow conjecture; they certainly did not compass his death in the manner they allege, indeed Allah exalted him to Himself; Allah is Mighty, Wise (4:158-159).

Nowhere in the Holy Quran has the term *raf'a* been employed as connoting bodily ascension to heaven. For instance, it is said:

Recite to them the case of him to whom We gave our Signs, but he passed them by. Then Satan went after him and he became one of those who had gone astray. Had We so willed We would have exalted (*raf'ana*) him by means of Our Signs, but he leaned towards the earth and followed his vain desires (7:176-177).

Again, it is said:

Recite the account of Idris according to the Book; he was indeed a righteous person and a Prophet, and We exalted (*rafa'ana*) him to a lofty station (19:57-58).

Having fallen into the flagrant error of misconstruing *raf'a* as connoting bodily ascent the common run of orthodox divines gave currency to the preposterous notion that Jesus having ascended bodily to heaven, his second coming meant his physical descent from heaven in the latter days. No one else, according

to them, could appear as the Promised Messiah.

1. The scripture of Islam, the Holy Quran proclaims the universality of the mission of the Holy Prophet.

Proclaim, O Prophet: O mankind, verily I am God's Messenger to you all (71:159).

We have sent thee as a bearer of glad tidings and a Warner for the whole of mankind, but most people know not (34:29). We have sent thee only as a mercy for the universe (21:108).

2. The Holy Quran contains comprehensive guidance for the whole of mankind for all time, as is said:

A Messenger from God, reciting pure scriptures, wherein are lasting commandments (98:4).

The Quran is a source of honour for all the worlds (68:53).

Blessed is He Who has sent down the Discriminating Book to His servant that he may be a Warner to all the peoples (25:2).

3. The Holy Quran is the only scripture which has been safeguarded against perversion under divine decree, as it is said:

Surely, We Ourself have sent down this Exhortation, and We will, most surely, safeguard it (15:10).

The Holy Quran has the unique distinction that of all the scriptures it is, from beginning to end, entirely verbal revelation. That in itself is a guarantee that it would not be perverted or twisted. All non-Muslim scholars who have made a research into the integrity of the text of the Holy Quran are agreed that it is an exact and accurate version of the verbal revelation that Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam, claimed God had vouchsafed to him. The divine guarantee of safeguarding the Holy Quran, that has just been set out, is not confined to preserving the integrity of the text alone. It extends to all the factors that bear upon the preservation of the Holy Quran as the perfect source of divine guidance for the whole of mankind for all time. For instance, it is a guarantee that the language in which it was revealed, namely classical Arabic, would always continue a living language in current use all the time, so that no difficulty might be encountered in determining and comprehending the meaning of the Holy Quran. Classical Arabic is today spoken and written over a much vaster area of the earth and by many hundred times the number of people than was the case when the Holy Quran was revealed. Besides, the Holy Prophet predicted that at the beginning of every century God Almighty would raise someone from among his followers who would set forth from the Holy Quran the guidance that may be needed by mankind from time to time. In the case of no

other scripture has the integrity of its text, its language and its guidance been maintained.

4. There is the promise contained in the Holy Quran, that in the latter days a prophet would be raised in Islam who would not only defend Islam against the concerted attacks of the followers and exponents of other faiths but would establish the superiority of Islam in every respect over all other religions, as is said:

He it is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of Truth, that He may make it prevail over every other religion, even though those who associate partners with Allah may dislike it (9:33).

The commentators of the Holy Quran are agreed that the promise contained in this verse would be fulfilled through the Mahdi and the Messiah, whose advent in the latter days had been prophesied by the Holy Prophet. He would be a spiritual reflection of the Holy Prophet himself, as is indicated in 62:4.

5. Islam is the only faith that requires belief in all the Prophets wherever they might have appeared. The Holy Quran affirms:

Verily, We have sent thee with enduring truth, as a bearer of glad tidings as a Warner; and there is no people to whom a Warner has not been sent (32:25).

Even more explicitly are the Muslims commanded:

Affirm; We believe in God and in that which has been sent down to us and that which was sent down to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and his children and that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and that which was given to all other Prophets from their Lord. We make no discrimination between any of them and to Him do we wholly submit ourselves (2:137).

This again is a sure indication that the great teacher who was to appear in the latter days must appear in the dispensation of Islam as he would then be a believer in the righteousness of all the Prophets and would not deny or reject any of them. If he were to appear in any other dispensation he would not be acceptable to those whose Prophets he denied or rejected. He must be the champion of God in the mantles of all the Prophets.

6. It is obvious that the great teacher, whose advent in the latter days had been foretold in every one of the principal revealed religions of the world, would be divinely guided, that is to say, he would be the recipient of divine revelation. This is also an important factor that would persuade a seeker after truth to determine that the promised teacher must appear within the dispensation of Islam,

inasmuch as the door of divine revelation has long been closed in all faiths other than Islam, and the followers of all those faiths hold firmly to the notion that divine revelation is no longer possible. Thus, the advent of a divinely inspired teacher is possible only in Islam.

Muslim divines had been agreed that the Mahdi Messiah would appear at the beginning of the fourteenth century of the Hegira, corresponding roughly to the last decade of the nineteenth century of the Christian era. Among several Christian denominations the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century was also considered as the time of the second coming of Jesus.

In the beginning of the year 1889 of the Christian era Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian laid the foundations of a religious community, bound to him in spiritual allegiance, which became known under his direction as the Ahmadiyyah Community, and the Movement that he initiated became known as the Ahmadiyyah Movement in Islam. On the day that he appointed for the first initiation into the Movement a large number of sincere, pious, Muslims joined the Movement by making the covenant of spiritual allegiance to him.

Towards the end of 1890 he wrote three books, *Izala Auham*, *Tauzeeh Maram* and *Fateh Islam*,

which were published in 1891, in which he announced that it had been revealed to him by the Divine that he was the Promised Mahdi whose advent had been prophesied by the Holy Prophet of Islam. The Holy Prophet, peace be on him, had also pointed out that the Mahdi and Messiah would be one and the same person. His announcement aroused bitter resentment among Muslims and non-Muslims alike and he and the small band of his followers who acclaimed him as true became the objects of inveterate hostility and severe persecution. Up to then he had been a greatly revered personage among the Muslims because of his piety and his outstanding service to the cause of Islam through his writings, particularly through his monumental work, the *Braheen Ahmadiyyah*, which was acclaimed by learned Muslims as an epoch-making exposition of basic Islamic principles as set forth in the Holy Quran. Some of the divines and other leading personalities among the Muslims who had employed superlative terms in praising the *Braheen Ahmadiyyah*, now turned against him and condemned him in even stronger terms. Leading divines pronounced him a disbeliever, outside the pale of Islam, and some went so far as to declare that his assassination would be a meritorious act.

His followers were condemned as disbelievers, outside the pale of Islam, and a campaign of bitter persecution was unleashed against them. They endured every type of

persecution with steadfastness, and under the directions of their leader occupied themselves with measures of self-improvement, deepening their righteousness, intensifying their consciousness of the Divine, strengthening their communion with Him and moulding their lives into wholly beneficent patterns. Their principal means for the achievement of these purposes became sincere, humble and earnest supplication to the Divine.

The pivot of the opposition and hostility encountered by the Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement on the part of the vast body of orthodox Muslims became his claim of being the Promised Messiah. In their estimation his claim was preposterous, as they could not understand how the Messiah, who, as they imagined, was sojourning with his physical body in heaven could suddenly reveal himself in the person of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who had been known since his birth (1835) as one of themselves with no supernatural pretensions whatever. Thus, the question whether Jesus had died a natural death long after the event of the crucifixion or had ascended bodily to heaven, without having suffered any kind of death, and was awaiting his physical descent to earth, became the subject of fierce controversy between Hazrat Ahmad and the orthodox divines opposed to him.

The opposition to the Founder of the Ahmadiyyah Movement was intensified by his

claim that while he was a devoted follower of the Holy Prophet and believed that no one who was not a devoted follower of that Chief among Prophets could be bestowed the status of a prophet, yet such status might, in the wisdom of God Almighty, be bestowed by way of reflection upon a truly righteous Muslim, who was so devoted to the Holy Prophet as to lose his own spiritual identity in that of the Holy Prophet, and that he himself was such a person who, by the sheer grace of God and through the spiritual grace of the Holy Prophet, had been bestowed that status. This was anathema to the vast body of orthodox Muslims, who believed that there was no possibility of any kind of prophethood continuing after the Holy Prophet, and yet in the same breath held that Jesus on his descent to earth would have the status of a Prophet.

Hazrat Ahmad put forward conclusive arguments from the Holy Quran and the pronouncements of the Holy Prophet in support of the validity of his claim and though the membership of his Movement continued to increase steadily, the hostility of the great body of orthodox Islam was in no wise assuaged.

One very striking natural phenomenon in support of the truth of the claim of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad that he was the Promised Messiah and Mahdi may be mentioned. The Holy Prophet, peace be on him, had indicated a very clear sign of the appearance of the Mahdi

which it was not in the power of any person to manufacture or improvise. *Darqutni*, an eminent and recognized authority on *Hadees* (sayings of the Holy Prophet), has recorded that the Holy Prophet said:

For our Mahdi there are appointed two signs which have never been manifested for any other claimant since the creation of the heavens and the earth. They are that at his advent there shall occur an eclipse of the moon on the first of its appointed nights and an eclipse of the sun on the middle of its appointed days, and both will occur in the same month of Ramadhan.

Now this is a celestial phenomenon which can only manifest itself according to the divine law governing the movements of celestial bodies and no one can either contrive it, or hasten or delay its manifestation. If this occurrence was to take place at all it could happen only on its predetermined dates. If Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad had announced his claim after the manifestation of this phenomenon it might have been thought that he had been influenced by that manifestation to put forward his claim. But the striking fact is that this concurrence not only happened on dates which conformed exactly with the prediction of the Holy Prophet, but that it happened almost exactly five years after the announcement of his claim by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

The eclipse of the moon normally occurs on the 13th, 14th or 15th night of a lunar month, and the eclipse of the sun on the 27th, 28th or 29th of the lunar month. The sign mentioned by the Holy Prophet, therefore, was that the moon would be eclipsed on the 13th night of a lunar month, and the eclipse of the sun on the 28th of the same lunar month, which will be the month of Ramadhan. This sign was to appear after and not before the advent of the Mahdi. It so happened that an eclipse of the moon occurred on Thursday night, the 13th of Ramadhan, 1311 Hegira (21 March 1894) and the eclipse of the sun occurred on the 28th of the same month of Ramadhan (6 April 1894), in exact accord with the prophecy of the Holy Prophet. The same phenomenon was repeated in the U.S.A. in 1895. This was an astonishing concatenation which not only was strong proof of the claim of Hazrat Ahmad but confirmed, in an extraordinary manner, the righteousness of the Holy Prophet himself who had predicted it. This manifestation attracted the attention of many truth loving people to Hazrat Ahmad and several of them joined his Movement under its impact.

NEW RESEARCH ON JESUS, THE CROSS AND THE SHROUD OF TURIN

by

**Khalil A-Nasir, Editor, *The Muslim
Sunrise***

(Being the text of an address delivered at the Annual Convention of the Ahmadiyya Muslims held in Washington, D.C. on September 5 and 6, 1981.)

The doctrine of the crucifixion and subsequent resurrection of Jesus is obviously the central theme of the entire Christian dogma. Not only the belief in the concept of redemption depends upon it but also the idea of Trinity is integrally built around it. Christians throughout the centuries have believed that, since man was forever handicapped with the "Original Sin," he could not receive his salvation on his own. It was necessary, therefore—it is contended—that God sent His only Son to be crucified so that, through his death on the cross, he would carry the sins of the believers.

A comprehensive and thorough review of all aspects of this dogma is clearly beyond the scope of the present study. The views of Islam and the orthodox Church are fundamentally different on the issue of the crucifixion as they are on several other aspects of the life of Jesus, his birth, his ministry as well as his resurrection, post-crucifixion developments and his second coming.

According to the orthodox Christians, Jesus was the only son of God. He was a part of Trinity who atoned for the sins of mankind through his death on the cross. They believe that he rose from the dead and ascended to heaven to sit on the right hand of God. They expect his return in the "latter days."

The Muslim belief is different on all of these aspects. The Holy Quran explains that Jesus was born to Mary without a father, that he was an eminent prophet of God, that he survived death on the cross and that, in the post-crucifixion life, he travelled to preach his message to the lost tribes of Israel. According to their belief, he died a natural death. His second advent, therefore, does not mean that Jesus himself will physically return but the coming of a Messiah in his footsteps and specifically with the mission of the revival of the faith.¹

Over the last century, specifically since 1898, some significant and valuable evidence has

been unfolding which may have far-reaching impact upon the dogma hitherto embraced by the orthodox Christian Church. In the light of the recent research, I intend to address myself with only two aspects of the numerous differences of the beliefs of the Muslims and the orthodox church.

Firstly, did Jesus actually die on the cross or did he survive this terrible ordeal?

Secondly, what is the impact of the latest revelations about the "Shroud of Turin" on the Christian dogma?

The Crucifixion

There is no difference between the Islamic and the orthodox church's positions that Jesus, of course, was actually put on the cross. In regards to the survival of Jesus from death during this punishment, many Christian scholars have taken the position that he certainly escaped such a death.

One of these eminent authors, Ernest Renan, questions the validity of the view that Jesus for certain suffered death. He raises the issue of circumstantial evidence in regards to the treatment of Jesus by Governor Pilate who sat in judgment. Renan and many other scholars argue that it was never his intention that Jesus

should die through crucifixion. Renan comments:

“Pilate then would have liked to save Jesus. . . . According to a tradition, Jesus found a supporter in the wife of the Procurator himself. . . and the idea that the blood of this beautiful young man was about to be spilt, weighed upon her mind. Certain it is that Jesus found Pilate prepossessed in his favour. The Governor questioned him with kindness, and with the desire to find an excuse for sending him away pardoned.”²

There are several passages in the New Testament relating to the Renan viewpoint. For example:

“Pilate then called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people, and said to them, ‘You brought me this man as one who was perverting the people; and after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him, neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us. Behold, nothing deserving death has been done by him: I will therefore chastise him and release him.’”³

In any case, this view has received almost unanimous support that on the persistent demand of the priests and the multitude, Pilate finally delivered Jesus to them to be crucified.

Many scholars have throughout the centuries commented about the nature of the punishment by hanging on the cross. They observe that crucifixion was a lingering kind of death, sometimes taking five or six days. On the other hand, Jesus was on the cross on Friday only for a few hours. In keeping with the established custom, all bodies were promptly taken off the cross before sun-down on Friday, the beginning of the sabbath. On this Friday, a storm darkened the skies much earlier and with extraordinary haste, Jesus and two robbers accompanying him were taken off the cross.

It may also be noted that the customary height of the cross upon which he was crucified was about ten feet. The purpose of crucifixion as explained by George Willard Benson in his book, *The Cross: Its History and Symbolism*, was not a quick execution but:

“The Jews believed that whoever ‘hangeth upon a tree was forever cursed.’”⁴

Norman Laliberte and Edward N. West in their co-authored work entitled *The History of the Cross* point out that:

“The first pictorial representations of Christ on the Cross took for granted a legend contained in *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, a document which has been dated as anywhere from the third to fifth centuries.”⁵

Further, they also explain that the customary cross was of not two but "three pieces: an upright, known as *stipes*, which was fixed in the ground, a transverse beam, known as *patibulum*, and a projecting seat to take the weight of the body."⁶ They express their surprise how far short of realism "artistic" art and later concepts have fallen from the facts.

Nicodemus, on whose gospel the earliest pictorial representation of the cross are based, also says that Jesus was drawn up on the cross "at the sixth hour of the day."⁷ If this statement is added to the other fact that, due to the darkening storm, his body was taken off much earlier than the actual sunset, then the total duration of his hanging comes to approximately three hours.

There is a general consensus in the text of the four gospels of the New Testament that, after Jesus was brought down from the cross on Friday evening, Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and asked for his body. On the report of the centurion that Jesus was dead, his body was granted to Joseph. It is also reported that Joseph brought a linen shroud in which the body was wrapped and laid in a "tomb" hewn out of the rock. A stone was rolled against the door of the tomb. By the morning of the third day, the gospels report, when some followers went to the tomb, they noticed that the stone was rolled back and Jesus had disappeared. They were told by

one or two men standing by (and here all versions of the four gospels differ from one another) that Jesus had "risen." The entire source of the event of resurrection is based on the report of these one or two unnamed men. The biblical scholars, therefore, repeatedly emphasize that there is no way to support the phenomenon of resurrection by historical, empirical or scientific evidence. Believers are told to accept the resurrection on faith alone. O'Collins, for example, draws his support on this issue from another author and comments:

"I agree with Lloyd Geering that we should remove Jesus' resurrection 'from the class of events which are primarily called historical and which are open to historical investigation.' As such it 'lies outside the scope of historical inquiry.'"⁸

In this brief review of the crucifixion phenomenon, due to the limitations of time, we have glossed over several related and interesting points. Briefly, they may be summarized as follows:

1. Pontius Pilate's wife had, even before the judgment, cautioned him that he should have nothing to do with that just man, Jesus, because "I have suffered many things in a dream because of him."⁹
2. Pilate found Jesus innocent, "took water and washed his hands before the multitude saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person."¹⁰

3. While on the cross for approximately three hours, Jesus received some nourishment in the form of vinegar, then bowed his head and 'gave up the ghost.' It is interesting to note that all four gospels mention this episode is not that "he died" but 'gave up the ghost.'¹¹ Is it not possible that the vinegar, instead of nourishing him, temporarily stopped his breathing even though his blood circulation continued?
4. While the order was given to break the legs of the robbers who were hung upon the cross with Jesus, the soldiers did not break his legs. In fact when one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, forthwith came out blood and water.¹²
5. Some scholars like Hans Naber have taken note of the fact that the lance thrust in the body of Jesus missed the heart by at least three inches. Naber also observes that "Nowhere in the Old Testament does it say that the Messiah had to die, or would die, on the cross."¹³
6. The place in which Jesus was taken and popularly referred to as a tomb was actually a sepulchre wide enough to permit people to enter into and move about in.¹⁴

The Shroud of Turin

For the last several years, the Shroud lying in the Renaissance Cathedral of San Giovanni Battista in Turin (Torino), capital of Piedmont, the northwest region of Italy, has become the subject of world-wide interest. According to many scholars there is very substantial possibility that this is the very same shroud in which the body of Jesus was wrapped and laid in the sepulchre.

From the Islamic point of view, Jesus was taken off the cross while still alive. This belief stems from the teachings based on the Quran and, therefore, independent of any corroboration such as the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin. On the other hand, the authenticity of this shroud can have a shattering impact on the dogmas of the death of Jesus on the cross, Resurrection and, consequently, the entire concept of Redemption.

Scholars deeply interested in studying and unveiling every aspect of the Shroud of Turin include among them "art historians, pathologists, linguists, biblical scholars, textile experts, chemists, physicists, and photographic specialists."¹⁵

Among recent works published on the latest research, two have received extensive reviews.

One by Ian Wilson is entitled *The Shroud of Turin: The Burial Cloth of Jesus Christ* (New York, 1978, Doubleday); and the other, *Shroud* by Robert K. Wilcox (New York, 1977, Macmillan and Bantam.)¹⁶

Let us briefly survey the historical background of this remarkable linen cloth. It was, for the first time, in 1357, exhibited in a collegiate church belonging to the deCharney family in Lirey, France. Its earlier history is still somewhat indefinite. Wilson surmises that it could have been taken to Edessa (presently called Urfa in the Anatolia region of Turkey) sometime before 50 A.D. In the sixth century it was discovered in a cavity in the city's wall and dubbed the Mandylion. In 944, the Mandylion was taken to Constantinople where it became part of the Byzantine emperor's collection.

Wilson suggests that this linen cloth may have been transported to France by a crusader, Knight Templar and ancestor of Geoffrey deCharney. In 1453, it was bequeathed to the House of Savoy who still maintain its ownership.¹⁷ Weaver supports the fact that a chronicler of the Fourth Crusade, Robert deClari, recorded his account of seeing a shroud, with the figure of Jesus, in Constantinople in 1203. He also records its transfer by deCharney's granddaughter, Marguerite, to Louis, Duke of Savoy, in 1453. Finally it was moved by the Savoy ruler across the Alps to his new capital Turin (Torino).

First attempts to photograph the shroud were made in 1898 when it was on public display. By 1931, at its next exhibition it was possible to use more minute photographic techniques. Finally, it started to become the subject of modern, advanced, sophisticated scientific examination in 1978, at its last exhibition.¹⁸

What makes this linen cloth extremely significant is the remarkable image it carries of a life size, unclothed, bearded man with long hair. Weaver observes that: "The body, anatomically correct, bears the frightful marks of scourging, cruxifixion, and piercing—perhaps by thorns and lance."¹⁹

Further he reports that:

"Woven in a herringbone twill, the shroud measures 14 feet 3 inches by 3 feet 7 inches. The narrow strip sewn to the left edge is of essentially identical weave. Research indicates that the apparently hand-spun fibres and the weave of the cloth are compatible with ancient Middle East textile technology."²⁰

It is surmised that the body of Jesus must have been laid on the end of the cloth with the remainder drawn up over his head and across the body to his feet. The man of the Shroud is estimated to be about 5 feet 7 inches tall.²¹

According to its first photographer, Secondo Pia, the Shroud acts like a photographic film.

When the cloth is photographed, the negative yields a positive image. It shows a male figure, about 5 feet 11 inches in height, lying with his hands crossed over his pelvis and his feet crossed at the ankles. As *Newsweek* reports:

“He is bearded and his long hair is knotted into a braid—a fashion among Jewish males in Biblical times. . . The face and body are marked by wounds and lesions in uncanny correspondence with the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ scourging and crucifixion. The back is covered with scores of dumbbell-shaped marks suggesting flogging. . . The wrists and feet are pierced between the fifth and sixth ribs on the right side of the body, there is a slanting wound that could have been made by a lance.”²²

Some of the experts who have thoroughly examined the shroud came from the U.S. Space Agency. Two scientists from the U.S. Air Force, John Jackson and Eric Jumper, have definitely concluded that the scroud contains accurate three-dimensional data, something that could not have been accomplished by painting. And Kenneth Stevenson of the U.S. Space Agency and spokesman of thirty American scientists who studied the shroud observed:

“It is technically impossible, according to our research, for a forger to provide a perfect, three dimensional image on a piece of cloth. . . Therefore we can conclude that there was a body beneath that cloth.”²³

Further he concluded that "the historical and scientific evidence indicates to me that the shroud is authentic. . . . It's medically, scripturally, historically and culturally accurate."²⁴

Another form of examination has been performed by a Swiss criminologist, Max Frei, who removed sampling of dust and other particles. After extensive microscopic laboratory tests, he found that there were traces of plants found in Saline areas like the Dead Sea and others from Palestine and Anatolia. Professor Gilbert Raes of the University of Ghent, Belgium, an internationally known textile expert, found that the traces of cotton are of a Middle East variety.

Perhaps all recent findings can be summed up in the words of chemist Ray Rogers of National Scientific Laboratory at Los Alamos who commented:

"Nearly all of us now believe that the shroud is not a painting. Except for a small amount of iron oxide, we find no pigment. And we do not think that either liquid or vapor could have produced the image we see."²⁵

Or, in the words of *Christianity Today* a leading and reputable Christian journal:

“Those who have studied the shroud, including a number of scientists, generally are convinced that the object is not a fraud. Because of the obvious marks on the image people have concluded that Jesus actually was buried in this cloth.”²⁶

Of course, there still exists a minority of skeptics who continue to doubt the authenticity of the image on the shroud. Some even question the actual existence of Jesus. One may refer to articles in *The Humanist* of January-February, 1978 (“The Shroud of Turin—Unmasked” by Joe Nickell) or Jeffrey Hart’s article, “Truth and Culture” in *National Review* (September 2, 1977) for differing viewpoints, *New Times* (November 13, 1979) on the other hand, joins the ranks of those who believe that the shroud is genuine and the image could not have been falsified.

However, scientific research proving the authenticity of the shroud and the image continues to mount. As recently as last year, *The New York Times* reported additional evidence uncovered by a Roman Catholic theology professor, Reverend Francis L. Filas, that some markings that appear in photographs of the shroud are extremely similar to those on a coin issued during the regime of Pontius Pilate between the years 29 and 33 A.D. These markings on the right eye of the man of the shroud could indicate that a coin was placed on the eyes of the man in the shroud to keep them closed.²⁷

Even within this year, another testimony was added through the publication of a report of the findings of some 30 American scientists including two atomic physicists from the National Laboratories in Los Alamos, New Mexico. This report clearly states that the shroud is not a forgery.²⁸

One wonders if, after the cumulative research on the shroud of Turin and the stunning image left on it by the blood of Jesus put on the cross, one can still accept the dogma that Jesus died on the cross and was later resurrected.

Conclusion

The fact remains that, based upon the scientific evidence that the image on the shroud is caused by the human blood from the injuries inflicted upon Jesus through flogging and nailing, he could not have died on the cross.

As explained by *Saturday Review*, the only possible conclusion is that:

“Though there was no sign of his breathing, an invisible set of diaphragmatic contractions might have ensured a minimal supply of air. . . The body removed from the cross was, then, alive but comatose.”²⁹

The implications of this stunning discovery for the Christian doctrines of death on the cross,

for the redemption of the sins of mankind and subsequent Resurrection cannot be overemphasized. The irony, on the other hand, is that even if there may be any doubts about the recent findings, the dogma of Resurrection still remains totally deprived of the needed historical evidence. Or, as *Newsweek* points out, if it is believed that the shroud of Turin was the burial cloth of Jesus who had died on the cross, "even such a wonder would not conclusively prove that the Resurrection occurred."³⁰

Footnotes

1. *The Holy Quran*, 4:158-9.
2. Renan, Ernest. *The Life of Jesus*. New York: Albert & Charles Boni, Inc. 1936. p. 267.
3. *The Holy Bible*, Luke, 23:13-17.
4. Benson, George Willard. *The Cross: Its History and Symbolism*. New York: Hacker Art Books. 1976. p. 25.
5. Laliberte, Norman and West, Edward N. *The History of the Cross*. New York: The Macmillian Company. 1960. p. 11.
6. *Ibid.* p. 11. See also *Ad Nationes* by Tartullian, Chapter XII, ANF, Vol. III, pp. 30-31.

7. *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, chapter 10.
8. O'Collins, Gerald. *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ*. Valley Forge, PA: The Judson Press. 1973. p. 62, footnote quoting Geering, Lloyd. *Resurrection: A Symbol of Hope*. London. 1971.
9. *Matt.*, 27:19.
10. *Matt.*, 27:20-25.
11. *John*, 19:28-30.
12. For further details on the nature of crucifixion being a lingering kind of death, reference may be made to William Stroud's *On the Physical Cause of the Death of Christ* and F.W. Farrar's *The Life of Christ*. A scholarly work of the last century, *Life of Christ* by Frederick Strauss, offers valuable background. An English translation of its fourth German edition was rendered in English, and edited, by Marian Evans (New York: C. Blanchard. 1860). This book was recently reproduced by Scholarly Press, St. Clair Shores, Michigan in 1970.
13. Naber, Hans. *The Fifth Gospel*. As quoted by Wilcox, Robert K. *Shroud*. New York: MacMillan Publishing Company. 1977. p. 71.
14. *Mark*, 15:46.
15. Weaver, Kenneth F. "Science Seeks to Solve the Mystery of the Shroud." *National Geographic*. June 1980, Washington, D.C.

16. For example, see: *Christianity Today*. November 17, 1978, pp. 32-33. Also *Saturday Review*, November 25, 1978. An earlier work called *The Shroud* was written by John Walsh (London: W.H. Allen. 1963, and New York: Random House).
17. *Newsweek*, September 18, 1979, in the article written by Kenneth Woodward and Christopher Matthews.
18. Weaver, Kenneth F. *National Geographic*, June 1980.
19. The shroud has been open for public **exhibition** at the intervals of every thirty-three years.
20. Weaver, Kenneth F. *National Geographic*, June 1980.
21. *Science*, Vol. 201, July 21, 1978. p. 235.
22. *Newsweek*, September 18, 1978.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Christianity Today*, November 17, 1978.
25. Weaver, Kenneth F. *National Geographic*, June 1980.
26. *Christianity Today*, November 17, 1978.
27. *New York Times*, June 30, 1980.
28. *Ibid.*, April 19, 1981.
29. *Saturday Review*, November 25, 1978.
30. *Newsweek*, September 18, 1978.

*Some Observations of a
Christian Scientist:*

THE TORAH, THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE QURAN

Dr. George Barbary, Dallas, Texas

It is always with quiet satisfaction that we notice fundamental similarity in great thoughts of different cultures. When the disclosure comes effortlessly in ordinary study and practice of Principle, it carries its own metaphysical truth and a priori logical certainty.

Recently a package was delivered to my office from Pakistan. It was a gift from the family of a young man whom I had advised both professionally and academically. It was a copy of the latest edition of the *Quran* translated by Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, former President of the International Court of Justice at the Hague, and a life-long friend of that family.

His Excellency Zafrulla Khan's reputation in Europe and the Middle East and his prestige with the American bar impelled my immediate attention to his Introduction. Within minutes the Jewish *Torah*, the Christian *New Testament*, and the Islamic *Quran* seemed as progressive intimates presaging a singular spirit of truth. Indeed, the comfort was metaphysical for, as explained in the 19th Century Christian Science textbook, it led to the substance of all, and All.

In that textbook, Mrs. Eddy wrote, "For God is infinite, all-power, all Life, Truth, Love, over all, and All."¹ This she understood to be the spiritual sense of the last line of the Lord's Prayer, "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever."² The spiritual sense of the Lord's Prayer prepares the student of Christian Science to identify with the power and the presence of God.

The prayer of similar import in the *Quran* is the Sura *Fatiha*. To understand the Sura *Fatiha* is to know the grace (*Rahman*) and the beneficence (*Rahim*) of the eternal Creator. Like Mrs. Eddy's spiritual interpretation of the Lord's Prayer, Sir Zafrulla Khan's *Introduction* gives the spiritual sense of the all-inclusive characteristics of the Divine. It is in the study and practice of these divine qualities or attributes that the student of the *Quran* is elevated from material sense of existence to spiritual sense of being.

The student or follower of the *Quran* is solely responsible, by striving in thought and action, to receive the grace of understanding spiritual being and the mercy or beneficence of divine guidance and provision. Gratitude and affirmation prepare the heart and mind. Sir Zafrulla Khan writes, "His mind subdued and overflowing with gratitude and adoration. . . He is now ready to affirm. . . he begins to feel that he is within the orbit of the operation of all those

attributes and is encouraged to submit. . . to the revealed Presence, rather than to the merely believed One.”³

The Sura *Fatiha* is at once both a summary of and a foreword to the *Quran*. “*Quran*” means that which is read, recited or rehearsed. By recitation in the original classical Arabic text, no less than five times daily, one hundred million students of the *Quran* hold the thought of Allah’s grace and beneficence and strive to receive more understanding of His nature. Whatever would interfere with holding that thought (such as alcoholic beverages) and whatever would intervene as a dependence (such as smoking tobacco) is prohibited to the student of the *Quran*.

To consider oneself as above and not dependent upon Divine guidance or to consider oneself superior to the ordinary run of people is to place oneself within “jinn.” Sir Zafrulla Khan writes:

“The root of the word connotes that which is covered up, hence, those who for any reason, birth, wealth, rank, dignity, office, skill, power, authority, strength or the like would have a tendency to regard themselves as superior to and to withdraw themselves from the society and companionship of their less favoured fellows.”⁴

The *Quran* constantly urges disciplined avoidance of pride and arrogance, the root and

soil of self-imposed jinn. The Christian Scientist recalls Mrs. Eddy's admonition that Christ Jesus reserved his sternest condemnation for the hypocrite,⁵ and would see Mrs. Eddy's "unselfed love"⁶ and St. John's "God is love"⁷ as the counterfact to be held in consciousness. This spiritual thinking and practical daily well-being are of the grace and beneficence of God.

In common, the Jewish people of the *Torah*, the Christian people of the *Gospel*, and the Islamic people of the *Quran* trace their roots to Abraham and his prophetic teachings at Jerusalem. Christ Jesus understood that he had not come to destroy the scriptures but to fulfill them⁸ and the *Quran* affirms that Jesus was given "... the Gospel which contained guidance and light, fulfilling that which was revealed before it in the *Torah*, and a guidance and an admonition for the righteous."⁹

In common, also, the mainstream of the *Torah*, the *Gospel*, and the *Quran* understood man as created in the image of God, perfect and without original sin. The first chapter of *Genesis*, the life testament of the Son of God, and Sura *Al-Rum* of the *Quran* stress as fundamental the purity of the nature designed by the Creator, "... the nature according to which He has fashioned mankind."¹⁰ Christ Jesus taught, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."¹¹

... One understands why without this way of spiritualizing thought, the pure wisdom of Solomon, Socrates and Spinoza could not itself occasion practical well-being. However pure the affection, material wisdom alone cannot demonstrate immediate practical good. Progress is the law of God and a progressive metaphysical insight benefits alike students of the *Torah*, the *Gospel*, and the *Quran*. Sir Zafrulla Khan writes:

“Whenever, in view of any approaching contingency, the need of fresh interpretation has arisen, Divine grace has inspired an illumined the mind of some devoted religious servant of His to set it forth clearly for the instruction and benefit of mankind.”¹²

In the same chapter of Matthew which sets forth the Lord's Prayer is recorded Christ Jesus' teaching the generalities of the divine Principle of grace and beneficence. Speaking of mankind's need of food, drink and clothing, he said, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”¹³

That rule is made manifest for all mankind. One, prepared by identifying with the power and presence of divine Love, receives practical wellbeing by holding in thought the correct view of man as spiritually perfect. Sincerely

desirous, all mankind has this grace to understand and this beneficence to receive. In any human circumstance, no matter what disharmony, dismay or need appears to material sense, so holding thought to the spiritual truth of that situation corrects it. Man in God's image reflects only the good He created.

It is available in this age for all who follow the *Torah*, the *New Testament* or the *Quran* to understand and to practice the spiritual or metaphysical interpretation of their own written word.

Footnotes

1. *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, 17:14
2. *Ibid.*, 16:24
3. Zafrulla Khan Tr., *The Quran*, p. xiv
4. *Ibid.*, p. xvii
5. *Science and Health*, 85:28
6. *Ibid.*, 1:4
7. 1 John 4:8
8. Matt. 5:17
9. *The Quran*, 5:47
10. *Ibid.*, 30:31
11. Matt. 5:48
12. Zafrulla Khan Tr., *The Quran*, p. iii
13. Matt. 6:33

A CURSORY GLANCE ON THE BIBLE

by

Dr. Qazi Muhammad Barkatullah

Bible, as we know, is not one book; but combination of many books. The biblical books prior to Christian era were called Old Testament, whereas New Testament was added after Jesus had left this world. Bible, therefore, comprises of both the Old and New Testament. The term Bible was for the first time applied on both Old and New Testament in the 5th century.

It is not certain who wrote various books of the Old Testament. The manuscripts of the Old Testament were not alike at the commencement of Christian era. Both the Hebrew and Greek versions differed with each other. The narration was without punctuation. About 200 B.C., seven learned Jews compiled and Old Testament which came to be known as Septuagint or Alexanderian version. The Christians adopted the Septuagint. But different versions appeared in Greek.

It is certain that Jesus himself did not write any book. It is also certain that Jesus did not depute anyone to take down what was being revealed to him by Lord God. Not only his sayings but also his actions were not recorded. So the writings of the New Testament lack objectivity which is absolutely essential for a book to be regarded holy.

It is said that the first Latin Bible originated in Africa. But the original Latin manuscript has not been found. In the 14th century, Bible was translated in German, when the printing press had been invented. In the 15th century, Bible was translated into European languages.

Bible in English appeared in 1538 A.D. In 1560 A.D., the English Bible was printed and, for the first time, divided into lines or verses as they were called. The Bible was then revised under King Henry VIII, and Queen Elizabeth I. Bible was again revised under King James and this version is popularly known as the authorised version. In printed form, the King James version, first appeared in 1611 A.D. Since then Bible has been subjected to many alterations and delections. There are numerous obvious contradictions in the Bible. Some of them are cited below:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Man was made after the beasts.
(Gen. 1:25-26) | Man was made before the beasts.
(Gen. 2:18-20) |
| 2. Eating fruit and even touching of the tree will cause one to die on the same day.
(Gen. 2:17; 3:3) | Both Adam and Eve did eat it but did not die and Adam lived for 930 years.
(Gen. 3:36; 5:5) |
| 3. Arphaxed was the father of Salah.
(Gen. 11:12) | Arphaxed was the grandfather of Salah.
(Luke, 3:35-36) |

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|---|---|
| <p>4. Of every clean beast by sevens were to be taken male and female; and of female.
(Gen. 7:2)</p> | <p>Take of every living thing two of every sort, male and female.
(Gen. 6:19)</p> |
| <p>5. Of fowls, sevens.
(Gen. 7:3)</p> | <p>Of fowls, two of every sort. (Gen. 6:20)</p> |
| <p>6. Abraham knew God by the name of Jehovah.
(Gen. 2:14)</p> | <p>Abraham did not know God's name Jehovah.
(Gen. 6:3)</p> |
| <p>7. Abraham was 135 years old when his father Tareh died and he left his homeland Haran.
(Gen. 11:26, 32, 12:4 Acts, 7:4)</p> | <p>Abraham was 75 years old at that time.
(Gen. 12:4)</p> |
| <p>8. Abraham had only one son.
(Hebrews, 11:17)</p> | <p>Abraham had sons one from Hagar, one from Sarah and six from Keturah.
(Gen. 16:15; 21:3 Gal. 4:22)</p> |
| <p>9. Keturah was Abraham's wife.
(Gen 25:1)</p> | <p>Keturah was not Abraham's wife.
(1 Chro. 1:32)</p> |
| <p>10. All the Souls of the house of Jacob were three score and ten.
(Gen. 46:26-27)</p> | <p>These Souls were three score and fifteen.
(Acts 7:14)</p> |
| <p>11. Aaron went up the mountain tip and died there.
(Num. 33:38)</p> | <p>Aaron died in Mosera and was buried there.
(Deu. 10:6)</p> |

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| <p>12. Sabbath is to commemorate God's rest on Seventh day.
(Ex. 20:10-11)</p> | <p>Sabbath is to commemorate successful exodus from Egypt.
(Deu. 5:14-15)</p> |
| <p>13. Sabbath is a Statue for ever.
(Lev. 23:3, 14)</p> | <p>Sabbath was made for man and not man for Sabbath. David broke it and the Priests in the temple broke it.
(Matt. 12:1-8)</p> |
| <p>14. David took a thousand chariots, seven hundred horsemen and twenty thousand footmen.
(2 Sam. 8:4)</p> | <p>David took a thousand chariots, and seven thousand horsemen and twenty thousand footmen.
(1 Chro. 18:14)</p> |
| <p>23. Only God is holy.
(Rev. 15:4)</p> | <p>"Preserve my soul for I am holy."
(Ps. 86:2)</p> |
| <p>24. Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem.
(2 Chro. 36:9)</p> | <p>Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign and he reigned in Jerusalem three months.
(2 Kings, 24:8)</p> |
| <p>25. Baasha died in the 26th year of the reign of Asa.
(1 Kings, 16:68)</p> | <p>Baasha built Ramah in the 36th year of the reign of Asa.
(2 Chro. 16:1)</p> |
| <p>26. Ahaziah was 22 years old when he began to reign.
(2 Kings, 8:26)</p> | <p>Ahaziah was 42 years old when he began to reign.
(2 Chro. 22:2)</p> |

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| 27. God had one Son.
(1 John, 4:9) | "The Sons of God come before God."
(Job, 1:6) |
| 28. Joseph was son of Heili.
(Luke, 3:23) | Joseph was son of Jacob.
(Matt. 1:16) |
| 29. No man has ascended unto heaven but he that came down from heaven.
(John, 3:13) | Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.
(2 Kings, 2:11) |
| 30. Jesus was to get throne to reign like David.
(Luke, 1:32-33) | Jesus says: "My Kingdom is not of this world."
(John, 18:36) |
| 31. Jesus' mission:
"Peace on earth and goodwill toward men."
(Luke, 2:14) | Jesus says: "Think not that I come to send Peace on earth. I come not to send peace, but a sword. . . I am come to send fire on earth."
(Matt. 10:34; Luke, 12:49) |

New Testament also contains four Gospels. Literally, Gospel means 'glad tidings.' No one is sure about the authors of the Gospels. If they were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, as said, they should have been written in Hebrew. But a Hebrew manuscript of any one of these Gospels is not traceable. It is, therefore, now maintained that these Gospels were not written by the said authors themselves but attributed or dedicated to them. This explains the reason that each Gospel does not appear as

'by' etc., but 'according to' Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

The material contained in the New Testament was not written coherently. But these were 'occasional' writings, letters, etc. Sometimes such writing appeared on the spur of the moment for particular purpose. Usually, they were addressed to particular persons or groups and so mentioned. As such, there was no reference to the so-called New Testament until about the second century of Christian era. There were numerous Gospels at that time, perhaps fifty or more in number. But only four were selected to be included in the New Testament. At the ceremonies conducted for the coronation of King Edward of England, the Bishop of London, presented to the king the four plus fifty-six Gospels which were bound together in one volume.

It is evident that the Gospels are not heavenly inspired. The Gospels were compiled from earlier material which has since been lost. A Christian scholar has dubbed them as:

'unapostolic digest of the second century.'

(*Jesus—Son of Mary*: p. 8)

Another church authority boldly admitted the Gospels to be man-made and not heavenly inspired:

'Those ancients. . . and their ancient writing were our gospels.' (*Jesus-Son of Mary*: p. 8)

Again, if the Gospels were heavenly inspired the same incident should have been reported the same way in all the Gospels. But there are instances where the Gospel writers contradict themselves or report the matter differently. Some examples are cited here.

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| 1. Angel appeared to:
Joseph-Matthew, 1:20. | Angel appeared to Mary.
Luke, 1:30 |
| 2. Annunciation took place:
Before Mary's conception.
Luke, 1:31. | Annunciation took place:
After Mary's conception.
Matthew, 1:18. |
| 3. Joseph was resident of:
Judea
Matthew, 2:1. | Jesus was resident of
Galilee
Luke, 2:4. |
| 4. Joseph's father was:
Jacob
Matthew, 1:16 | Joseph's father was:
Heli
Luke, 3:23 |
| 5. Jesus and his ass:
He rode both ass and
colt simultaneously
Matthew 21:7. | He rode the colt only
Mark, 11:27, Luke, 19:35. |
| 6. Who carried Jesus' cross?
Jesus himself.
John, 19:17. | Simon of Cyrine.
Matthew, 27:32. |
| 7. The words super-
scribed on the cross:
'This is Jesus, the King
of the Jews'
Matthew, 27:37. | 'Jesus of Nazareth, the
King of the Jews'
John, 19:19.
'This is the King of the
Jews'—Luke, 23:38. |
| 8. Disciples to meet Jesus
were: Terrified
Luke, 24:37. | Disciples were glad.
John 20:20. |

9. Names of Apostles:

Reported differently—Matthew, 10, Luke, 6.

The Bible, through the time, has lost its flavor of being holy. For, it has undergone textual alterations at the pleasure of its compilers. The Bible, as such, is no longer holy to be the spiritual guide for believers.

§

The Future of Islam

“The time is approaching when God will grant worldwide popularity to this Movement and this dispensation will spread in the East and the West, in the North and the South, and in the world. Islam and this Movement will become synonymous terms. This is a revelation from God on High for Whom nothing is Impossible.”

(‘TOFAH GOLARAWIYA’ by Hazrat Mirza Ghullam Ahmad, Promised Messiah and the Founder of Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam.)

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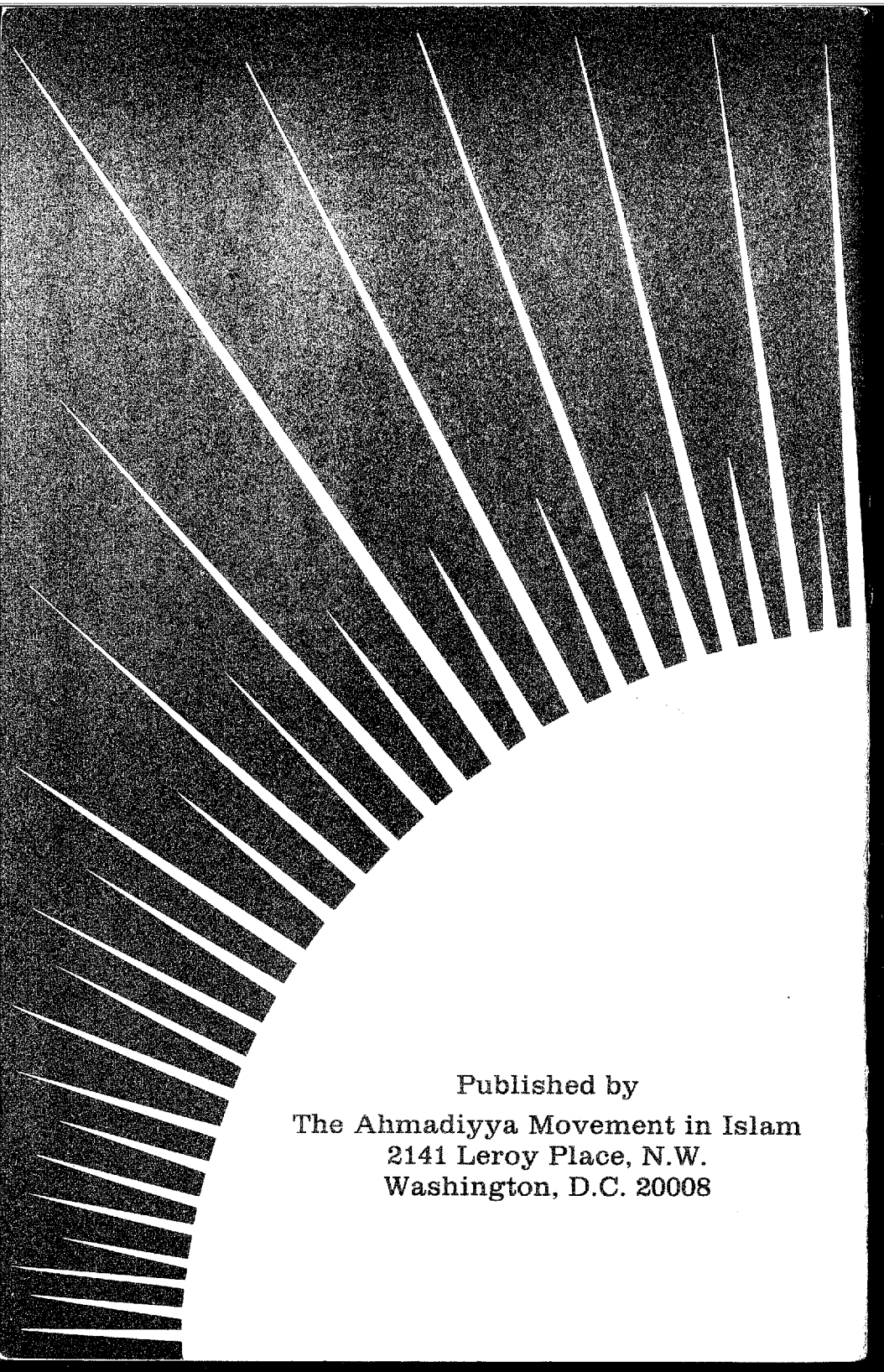
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